

EAST – WEST COLLECTOR FOCUS AREA

Delta Township Non-Motorized Transportation Plan Basis for Preliminary Recommendations

Non-motorized trails and greenways are becoming very popular throughout the country. They are fast becoming part of the “green infrastructure” for healthy walkable communities. Trails and Greenways are generally recognized as one of components that contribute to increasing real estate sales and values 7-15% according to National Geographic Magazine. They also contribute to a healthy life style, promote socialization and provide an alternate form of transportation from the automobile. One of the main purposes of a non-motorized system is to connect parks, neighborhoods, municipal services, schools and retail centers. For these reasons, the creation of trails and greenways are in the best interest and long-term welfare of the community.

The Delta Township Non-motorized Transportation Plan (NMTP) has identified the need for “off-road” routes within the township. One off-road route has been identified to run in an East / West direction. Most of that route is located in the northeast quadrant, which is the most populated area of the township. Because the northeast quadrant of the township is mostly developed the opportunity to create a new “off-road” non-motorized corridor is very limited. Although non-motorized improvements along roadways, is another primary objective of the plan, they do not offer separation from vehicles or the highest quality recreational experience.

Therefore, the “East-West Collector”, which is an undeveloped right-of-way, appears ideal to service this need. The corridor is for the most part undeveloped from the west end of Sharp Park to Canal Road. In most sections it is 66’ wide. About two thirds of the corridor is wooded or contains shrubs, with the remainder tall grasses.

The Delta Township Board of Trustees requested that the consultants, Landscape Architects and Planners, Inc. (LAP) host a set of “Citizen Input Meetings” designed to focus on the “off-road” routes. The East / West Route commonly referred to as the “East / West Collector” was identified as a potential route during the conceptual development phase of the planning process. Following the Citizen Input meeting held on September 21, 2004, LAP collected and analyzed comments made by citizens. For specific comments please refer to the “Summary of Comments” which is attached.

RESPONSE TO CITIZENS COMMENTS

1. Security: Trails are generally safe. Statistics have shown trails to be as safe as the neighborhoods in which they are constructed. Crime statistics are generally not related to the trails but more to the land uses near the trails. In mid Michigan trail statistics are lacking, however reports from local police departments do not indicate there is significant crime on any of the Mid Michigan trails and some indicate “no crime” being reported at all.

2. Publicly Owned Land: The East / West Collector is for the most part publicly owned land (66' in most areas) from Sharp Park to Canal Road. Although it is a publicly owned any trail design must respect the rights of the adjacent landowners as much as possible. Individual landowners should be consulted during the preliminary design stage of the route to account for privacy measures among other design issues.
3. Design Criteria: It is recommended that current design criteria be used to design the trail. This would include meeting or exceeding the ADA (barrier free) standards, ASSHTO (design standards) and others that are common for public trails. Privacy should be accommodated to the extent possible by the use of fencing, landscaping or other visual barriers. Setbacks should be used effectively within the 66' public right of way.
4. Lighting: Lighting is not recommended along the trail. The hours of operation for trails are generally from dawn to dusk. The need for lighting usually appears only in densely populated areas where use is promoted after dark such as near downtown centers, retail areas, and event venues. This area of Delta Township does not fit this description since it is primarily a residential community.
5. Noise: Non-motorized trails are generally quiet for the most part. Noise usually becomes a factor if large events are scheduled on the trail or if they are motorized. Occasional barking dog or people voices are the main source of noise. Enforcement of regulations can control most of these disturbances.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EAST-WEST COLLECTOR

1. Materials: Consider the entire range of trail surfaces when planning this section. Don't assume that asphalt is the only choice. If strollers and/or roller blades are a primary factor then asphalt may be the material for choice, but others should be considered in the design process based upon potential uses.
2. Conservation Practices: Use the most up to date conservation practices when developing a trail within a vegetated area such as the East / West Collector. Enhance and/or avoid sensitive natural features whenever possible (primarily large healthy trees and/or underbrush). Use interpretation and education whenever possible to allow for greater appreciation of natural resources. Develop conservation policies that protect and enhance the natural systems associated with this area.
3. Trail Heads and Access Control: Discourage the development of large trailheads in neighborhoods. Concentrate on intimate connections to neighborhoods and destinations. Encourage the use of the local community residents. Use barriers and/or gates to deter motor vehicles from entering the trail. Post signs to inform users of regulations.
4. Other Agencies: Communicate with and utilize the expertise of other agencies (Drain Commissioner, Road Commission, Police Department, Public Service Dept. Parks Dept. and others) during the design, development and management of this trail system.

5. Screening: Provide adequate setbacks and generous screening or buffers between the trail and the adjacent property owner. Use vertical barriers, fencing or similar means to provide and create privacy where requested.
6. Patrols: Provide adequate police patrols and neighborhood watch programs from the initial stages of development. Add a bicycle patrol component to the police program. Allow designated neighbors to participate in the patrol of the trails and greenways and encourage communication and participation.
7. Maintenance Program: Designate the area as a Township Park and allow the Parks Dept. to manage the property. The trail will require regular trash pick up, sweeping and plowing. Provide the personnel and equipment necessary to perform these functions.

FUTURE ACTIONS

In an effort to conclude the Non-Motorized Transportation Planning process, the following outline recommends additional steps to follow after the Master Plan is adopted that will allow more in-depth analysis of this specific route.

Overall Non-Motorized Transportation Planning Process (Main Categories)

- ☐ Routing Plan – Currently in Process
- ☐ Study / Design Development – Design of Specific Areas Based on Priorities
- ☐ Funding – Application for Grants and/or Allocation of Local Funds
- ☐ Implementation – Construction Plans, Bidding and Construction
- ☐ Maintenance and Post Evaluation – Township to Provide Maintenance and Monitor Procedures

Non-Motorized Transportation Projected General Phasing

Phase 1 – Red Routes on Master Plan	0-20 years
Phase 2 – Yellow Routes on Master Plan	21-35
Phase 3 – Orange Routes on Master Plan	36-49
Phase 4 – Green Routes on Master Plan	50+

General Phasing Recommendations

- A. Sharp Park to Creyts Road (Proto-Type Project)
- B. Sharp Park to Waverly Road
- C. Creyts Road to Canal / I-96

East – West Collector Routine Design Recommendations

Study Phase

- A. Obtain the following information
 1. Boundary Survey
 2. Topographic Survey
 3. Tree Survey
 4. Ecological Survey

- 5. Hydrological Survey
- B. Analyze Data
- C. Preliminary Plan
- D. Ownership – Agency in Charge (Dedicated Park vs. Others)

Design Development

- A. Meet with Citizens to discuss design parameters
 - 1. Discuss individual needs
 - a. Trail Location within the Right of Way
 - b. Individual Access to Trail from Adjacent Property Owners
 - c. Privacy Issues – fencing, landscaping, setbacks
- B. Design Issues
 - a. Vehicle deterrents – bollards, gates, barriers
 - b. Drainage – trench drains, culverts, catch basins, etc.
 - c. Road Crossings and or Intersections
 - d. Signs (location, type, size etc.)
 - e. Amenities (benches, trail markers, exercise stations, etc.)
 - f. Materials – (asphalt, concrete, limestone, cinders, etc.)
 - g. Sizes – (width, depth of materials, setbacks, etc.)

Determine Operation Procedures

- A. Operation Procedures
 - a. Hours of Operation – Dawn to Dusk
 - b. Maintenance Schedule – Personnel and Equipment
 - c. Security – Police and Citizen Patrols
 - d. Support – Trails Group / Citizen Design Review Committee